

Application Serial No.: 10/718,144
Amendment Dated: September 10, 2004
Reply to Office Action Dated: March 11, 2004

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Figs. 1-5. These sheets, which include Fig(s). 1-5, replace the original sheets including Fig(s). 1-5. Applicant has added the legend, "Prior Art" to Figs. 1-5.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet(s)

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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

I. THE SPECIFICATION AND DRAWINGS

In the specification, paragraphs 0024; 0025; 0053; and 0054 have been amended to correct minor problems stemming from the translation. Applicant submits that these changes address the Examiner's objections to the disclosure. Also, ¶ 0047 has been amended to correct another minor problem.

Figures 1-5 have been amended to identify them as prior art. Paragraph 0051 has been amended to identify part 29 as the pad. Paragraph 0052 has been amended to identify part 28 as the vacuum chamber. Applicant submits that these changes address the Examiner's objections to the drawings.

II. THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-11 remain in this application. Claims 1, 5 and 11 have been amended and claim 12 has been added.

A. SECTION 112

Applicant submits that the amendment to claim 5 has addressed the Section 112 rejection.

B. CLAIM 11 IS NOT ANTICIPATED BY BACHMANN

The Examiner rejected claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Bachmann, U.S. Patent No. 5,456,170. Bachmann, however, teaches an ink tank which must be moved vertically (via the cylinder-piston unit 57) before it and the printing cushion 39 are returned to their initial positions. In contrast, claim 11's ink tank does not move vertically, but only forwardly and rearwardly in substantially the same horizontal direction as the pad printing head. Thus, claim 11, as amended, is neither taught nor suggested by Bachmann.

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We note that the International Preliminary Examination Report found claim 11 novel in view of Bachmann's corresponding European patent, EU 0 611 258, which is further evidence that the present claim 11, as amended, is patentable over Bachmann.

C. CLAIMS 1-3 ARE NOT OBVIOUS IN VIEW OF BACHMANN AND ROBBINS

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3 as unpatentable over Bachmann in view of Robbins, U.S. Patent No. 2,500,871. Robbins discloses a machine for marking cylindrical articles which requires the tablet to be rotated in order to be printed. Col. 3, lines 19-38. And, Robbins uses a printing wheel to print the rotating article. Col. 3, lines 23-28. This results in a printed impression around the entire circumference of the cylindrical article. The rotation of the printing wheel is necessary for Robbins' machine to work properly. In addition, Bachmann's vertically moving ink tank results in an open ink system. In contrast, claim 1 calls for a closed ink system; wherein said printing liquid tank (30) is arranged to slide over a cliche (33) in substantially only a horizontal motion. Thus, if Bachmann and Robbins were combined, the result would be a machine that did not work. Neither Bachmann nor Robbins alone, or in combination, teach or suggest how to substitute Bachmann's pad printing system for Robbins' printing wheel or how to achieve a closed ink system and, thus, claim 1 and its dependent claims 2 - 10 and 12 are not obvious.

As with claim 11, the International Preliminary Examination Report found claim 1 novel and non-obvious over Bachmann in view of Robbins. This further buttresses applicant's position that claim 1, and all of its dependent claims, are patentable.

D. CLAIMS 4 AND 5 ARE NOT OBVIOUS IN VIEW OF BACHMANN AND ROBBINS AND WEST

West teaches a method for packaging food products, by providing different shaped apertures to support open containers. Col. 1, lines 8-29. Neither West, Bachmann, nor Robbins teach or suggest the printing apparatus for printing tables and the like of claims 4 and 5. These are non-analogous arts and claims 4 and 5 are not obvious for these reasons and for the reasons recited above with respect to claims 1 - 3.

E. CLAIM 6 IS NOT OBVIOUS IN VIEW OF BACHMANN, ROBBINS AND ACKLEY

Because Bachmann and Robbins do not teach or suggest claims 1 - 3, claim 6 is likewise not obvious.

F. CLAIM 7 IS NOT OBVIOUS IN VIEW OF BACHMANN, ROBBINS AND MAERKEDAHL

Because Bachmann and Robbins do not teach or suggest claims 1 - 3, claim 7 is likewise not obvious. Maerkedahl addresses delivering surface-mounted devices to a mounting apparatus (e.g. chips and circuit cards). This is a non-analogous art and a person of skill in the relevant art would not be motivated to use Maerkedahl. Moreover, Maerkedahl is blowing away “incorrectly oriented components,” not waste objects, as recited in claim 7. Claim 7 is thus non-obvious.

G. CLAIM 8 IS NOT OBVIOUS IN VIEW OF BACHMANN, ROBBINS AND ROHWETTER

Because Bachmann and Robbins do not teach or suggest claims 1 - 3, claim 8 is likewise not obvious. Rohwetter deals with drying flat objects, such as CD's, not the curved tablets of the present invention. Whether drying stations may be well-known in the CD-printing art does not establish that they are well-known in the tablet-printing art. Claim 8 is non-obvious.

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H. CLAIMS 9 AND 10 ARE NOT OBVIOUS IN VIEW OF BACHMANN, ROBBINS AND CHARLIER

Because Bachmann and Robbins do not teach or suggest claims 1 - 3, claims 9 and 10 are likewise not obvious. Charlier teaches printing the sides of gambling chips with a pad printer. This is a non-analogous art and Charlier should not be combined with Bachmann and Robbins. Claims 9 and 10 are also patentable.

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,



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